Language, Literature, and Interdisciplinary Studies (LLIDS)
ISSN: 2547-0044
http://ellids.com/archives/2018/09/2.1-Tembo.pdf

www.ellids.com

Atlantis as Heterotopia: On the Theoretical Simultaneity of Plato's Atlantis

Kwasu D. Tembo

The concept of a mythical island appears in the texts of numerous occidental cultures as both a literary construct and as part of mytho-religious systems. Ranging from sources found in Slavic, Nordic, Greco-Roman, British, and Spanish legendary traditions, the enchanted and/or hidden island is ubiquitous. The mythical islands of occidental folklore and literature are not only conferred with the qualities of, but are also predicated on the tension between conceptions of, utopia and heterotopia, the staticity of paradise, and the cosmopolitanism of ideological and cultural intertextuality or *bricolage*. Current scholarship concerning Plato's Atlantis heretofore tends to it read as circuitous, closed, and circumscribed by recursive analytical areas of interest in a way that leaves a scarce scope for advancements of theoretical interpretations of Plato's account of the island unless they necessarily rely on historicity, archaeology, or philology. In order to redress the *theoretical* paucity of Atlantian scholarship and to contribute to lines of inquiry therein which seek a more theoretical hermeneutic with regard to the mythical island, this essay opens with a close reading of Atlantis based on excerpts from Plato's account of the island-continent and its city-state detailed in the dialogues, *Timaeus and Critias* (360 BCE). It further explores the manner in which Plato portrays Atlantis as a heterotopian chronotope so as to develop a speculative theoretical profile and analysis for the mytho-historical island-state, testing the Isle as a theoretical space in relation to issues and debates concerning other spaces, that is, heterotopia and utopia. To this end, it will compare and contrast the Platonic Atlantian narrative against two possible models of interpretation, namely, Michel Foucault's comparison of the relationship between utopia and various types of heterotopias in "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias" (1984), and Frederic Jameson's analysis of the tensions between space, time, and utopia *in Archaeology of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science* Fictions (2005).

A cursory glance at contemporary Atlantian studies reveals that the preponderance of scholarship pertaining to the Isle can be divided into what I call three broad analytical archipelagos: Philological Atlantis, Archaeological Atlantis, and Philosophical Atlantis. Diverse parsing analytical approaches have been brought to bear on Plato's account of the Isle. In "Plato's Atlantis Story: A Prose Hymn to Athena" (2008), Tom Garvey argues that (re)viewing the Atlantis narrative promulgated by Plato as an encomium of the Greek Goddess Athena reveals that the true character of the narrative is an attempt to demonstrate the justice and beneficence of the gods. More particularly, in stressing the ritual elements of the narrative and focusing on alterations to Athenian myth therein, "…the Atlantis story *qua* hymn to Athena is thus a means of reclaiming for Athens its patron goddess, a re-enactment of the original chariot race for the city in a manner more amenable to Plato's idiosyncratic conception of the gods" (Garvey 391-2).

Other classical works of Atlantian scholarship like Christopher Gill's *Plato: The Atlantis Story* (1980), perform a broadly philological study of *Timaeus* and *Critias*, offering vocabulary, sketches of Atlantian geography, and a methodological introduction to the myth that outlines the numerous interpretations of the text (Gill). Here, Gill makes recourse to a circuitous Atlantian hermeneutics centred on the controversial character of the Isle as presented by Plato, namely, interpreting the Isle as purely factual (which Gill argues against), or as a strictly political allegory of Plato's experimentation with fictional prose[1]. In its approach, Gill's scholarship is a continuation of the scholarly tradition established by Proclus' commentary on the dialogues, offering various insights and discourse on over eight centuries of Platonic interpretation[2].

In "Remembering Atlantis: Plato's Timaeus-Critias, the Ancestral Constitution, and the Democracy of the Gods" (2017), Casey Stegman offers a detailed analysis of the political role of the Atlantis narrative in relation to Plato's own politics. Referring to numerous insights made about Plato's involvement with Athenian politics, Stegman's analysis subsequently reorients not only the contemporary understanding of the Atlantis myth *in principium*, but more importantly, the narrative in relation to the scholarly disagreement concerning Plato's participation in the mid-fourth

[1]see also Gill's 1979 essay "Plato's Atlantis Story and the Birth of Fiction".
[2]see *Proclus: Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, Volume 6, Book 5: Proclus on the Gods of Generation and the creation of Humans, 2017.

century debates concerning Athenian ancestral constitution or *patrio politeia as well.* (Stegman).

In "A Scientific Approach to Plato's Atlantis" (2015), Massimo Rapisarda takes an empirical approach to Atlantian hermeneutics, attempting to use the various archaeological sciences to investigate the archeo-historical verisimilitude of the Isle of Plato's recounting. Rapisarda's investigation is thorough with aspects of the myths and replete with geological diagrams as well as concise analytical interventions concerning its central figures. His investigation opens with an account of the origin of the myth itself and then moves on to discuss a range of aspects concerning the Isle: the credibility of its author contra alternative accounts of Atlantis such as those found in Diodorus Siculus' forty volume *History of the World*[3] *(*1st Century BC) compendium and Herodotus' *Histories* as well as detailed analysis of archaeological findings of Atlantis' time (Rapisarda).

Works like Omid Tofighian's *Myth and Philosophy in Platonic Dialogues* (2016) and Sarah Broadie's *Nature and Divinity in Plato's Timaeus* (2011) explore the myth of Atlantis as ancillary support for a more primary thesis analysing the paradigms, epistemic possibilities, and metaphysics of divinity contra mortality in the dialogues (Boradie 2011). There are also other works that offer illuminating comparative analysis of Atlantis against other mytho-religious utopias such as Diskin Clay and Andrea *Purvis'Four Island Utopias: Being Plato's Atlantis, Euhemeros of Messene's Panchaia; Iamboulos' Island of the Sun; Sir Francis Bacon's New Atlantis, with a Supplement on Utopian Prototypes, Developments, and Variations* (1999). In the text, the authors not only provide a close reading of the source texts for each island utopia named in the title, but also provide an *intertextual* analysis of how these chronotopes function as utopias in themselves and in relation to one another. In situating utopian studies in a pre-Morean milieu by making recourse to more ancient examples, particularly Greco-Roman utopianism, Clay and Purvis provide a detailed analysis of utopianism in relation to mythical isles that make comprehensive references to numerous Classical works ranging from the works of Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Simonides, to Herodotus. In their analysis of what they refer to as 'proto-utopias,' such as the Islands of the Blessed and the exotic isles of the *Odyssey* as forerunners of Platonic utopianism, the authors offer an interesting *genealogy* of

[3]Editor's note: The original Latin text is referred to as *Bibliotheca Historica*. Rapisarda uses the translated title as *Library of History.*

mythical isles in relation toutopianism. In a section titled "Utopian Prototypes, Developments, and Variations," Clay and Purvis collect various excerpts concerning the Elysian Fields, the Isles of the Blessed, Hyperborea, Ethiopia, and Amazonia and in doing so highlight an underlying commonality that ultimately undifferentiates them all—each, in their way presents the mythical isle as a chronotope playing host to alternative societies and/or radical alterity in terms of onto-existential states of being. Despite Abraham Akkerman's excellent account of spacio-temporal imperatives inherent in Plato's Atlantian myth in relation to urban space and the concept of the Ideal City in "Platonic Myth and Urban Space: City-Form as an Allegory" (2014), there exist few accounts of Plato's Atlantis that offer categorically theoretical readings of the island as a chronotope or space-time of radical alterity that does not rely on political allegory and/or utopian discourse.

The ur-example of an Atlantian narrative is found in the dialogues of Plato. It is generally accepted that Plato uses Atlantis as a literary device in his dialogues to explore various issues and debates concerning Classical Greek political thought and Western political thought. He provides two accounts of Atlantis, detailing its history and its relation to other historico-archaeologically verifiable ancient city-states (Jowett). The first account comes from *Timaeus.* In this dialogue, a Greek lawmaker named Solon recounts the history of Atlantis. He describes the Atlantian kings as having fought and lost a great military campaign some nine thousand years ago against the Athenians. At that time, the ancient Atlantian kings had begun a predominantly naval offensive to conquer the Atlantic Ocean with machinations to establish colonies in Europe and Asia beyond (Donnelly 1882). To mount their defence, the Athenians made a league with other Greek city-states to answer the Atlantian threat. After repelling the Atlantian advance, the Athenians freed Egypt as well as all other countries or city-states under Atlantian rule. Shortly after their defeat, Atlantis suffered massive geological cataclysms like earthquakes and floods, among others, resulting in the total destruction of the island-continent (E.E.O). The second is offered through *Critias* with a more detailed account of the history of Atlantis. According to Plato, when the Olympian gods divided the dominion of the earth amongst themselves, Poseidon was given Atlantis as part of his allotment. He married a mortal named Cleito and with her sired the Atlantian royal line. The royal house of Atlantis was taken forward by the ten demigod sons of Poseidon and Cleito (E.E.O). Atlas, Poseidon's first born, was crowned the high-king while his younger brothers were made princes. Atlas had numerous sons whose order of

succession was based on primogeniture. Plato describes Atlantis as peaceful, progressive, and fecund. Furthermore, to supplement the natural abundance of Atlantis, intercontinental import and trade were widely practised in the capital (Jowett). In terms of Atlantian statecraft, Poseidon decreed a set of strict laws, inscribed on a pillar of the precious metal orichalcum, that the Isle's leaders were bidden to follow. These laws included rules of government, protocols and rituals of judgement, assuaging of feuds, vendettas, or quarrels amidst the legislators, and procedures of joint council meetings (Donnelly). Plato's narrative states that the prosperity of all Atlantians, high and low, was dependent on their collective adherence to Poseidon's laws. However, when these laws began to be forgotten, predominantly due to dilution of the so-called divine nature of the Atlantians by wide-spread propagation with mortals, the Isle and its people failed. As a result, Zeus and the twelve principle Olympian gods and goddesses convened a council to pass judgement against the wayward Atlantians. Plato's narrative of the subsequent fate of Atlantis ends abruptly following his description of this Olympic council (E.E.O).

In *Archaeologies of the Future* (2005), Jameson states that one of the objective preconditions for a utopia is that a utopia must presume that "...the miseries and injustices thus visible must seem to shape and organize themselves around one specific ill or wrong," and further that "...the Utopian remedy [toward such ills] must at first be a fundamentally *negative* one, and stand as a clarion call to remove and to extirpate this specific root of all evil from which all others spring" (Jameson 12; emphasis mine). For this reason, Jameson cautions that approaching utopias with *positive* expectations is a mistake, which I extrapolate in my analysis of Atlantis to suggest that while a preponderance of occidental mythical isles are typically seen as spaces that consistently represent the idyllic, particularly pastoral utopia, they also simultaneously *misrepresent* such formulations in doing so.

While the bounty of Atlantis as described by Plato offers "...visions of [a] happy world, spaces of fulfillment and cooperation, representations which correspond generically to the idyll or the pastoral rather than the utopia," the concept of the mythical isle is not what it seems (Jameson 12). From Jameson's theoretical perspective, outside of Classical Greek political thought and allegory, there are two distinct ways that Plato's Atlantis, in either utopian or dystopian terms, can be thought: either as an "…alleviation and elimination of the sources of exploitation and suffering" or as a "…composition of blueprints for bourgeois comfort," that is, the mythical island as resort,

land of extreme luxury, and/or unattainable or radical exclusivity (Jameson 12). According to Jameson,

> Utopian space is an imaginary enclave within real social space, in other words, that the very possibility of Utopian space is itself a result of spatial and social differentiation. But it is an aberrant by-product, and its possibility is dependent on the momentary formation of a kind of eddy or self-contained backwater within the general differentiation process and its seemingly irreversible forward momentum. (Jameson 15)

When thought of in utopian/dystopian terms the notion of atemporality, that is a chronotope's ability to remain unravaged by time's dismantling of spatial inertia, a mythical isle like Atlantis appears to be akin to a "pocket of stasis," an "enclave within which Utopian fantasy can operate" (Jameson 15). This atemporality decouples the utopian enclave from the momentum and forces of social change. Such socio-political atemporality is, in praxis, "...the distance of the Utopias from practical politics, on the basis of a zone of the social totality which seems eternal and unchangeable, even within this social ferment [Plato has] attributed to the age itself" (Jameson 15). If one considers Atlantis as an example of such a space, even though the Atlantian Acropolis which Plato describes as being topographically permeable along specific channels (the transversal causeway diametrically cutting through all five concentric circular landmasses comprising the city, in particular), it is, in its residual praxes, still a closed space triple canopied by zonal walls. As such, within the remit of the Platonic legend, Atlantis is a space beyond the social turbulence of other continental societies (Greece and Egypt, in particular) due to both its natural oceanic barricades and the edifices of Atlantian engineering that doubly surround and sequester it.

However, while Jameson describes a utopia as a space predicated on stasis and insularity, a passive preservation achieved through inaction, the protective insularity that Plato's Atlantis projects does not stop it from projecting itself outwardly. The aggressive and partially successful naval campaign waged by the Atlantian navy, its international/intercontinental imperialism, and the continued socio-economic and martial supremacy which, in turn, warranted the formation of a united Greek coalition to answer the Atlantian war-machine, illustrates that Plato's Atlantis was not a model of socio-political abstentionism. It is described as a distant, albeit active, emanation of socio-political, economic, and martial power. Therefore, unlike Jameson's interpretation of a utopia, Plato's Atlantis is

thoroughly engaged in the socio-political, cultural, and economic gestalt of the ancient world. It is, in the last instance, a prime mover involved and influencing the direction of its momentum through warfare and commerce. While isolated and unassailable due to the natural defence offered by the Atlantic ocean, Atlantis, as an interstice-space, would appear to be an immovable force. According to Jameson, utopias of this seemingly impassive kind can only be troubled "...in those rare moments in which revolutionary politics shakes the whole edifice." In the case of Plato's Atlantis, this purpose was served by the Greek coalition, on the one hand, and the decidedly apolitical cataclysm that destroyed the island itself, on the other (Jameson 16).

Within the space of the theoretical profile being developed here, it is becoming increasingly clear that a preliminary axiom one can deduce is that Plato's Atlantis is deeply dualistic. While the house of Atlas would appear to be a court of ancient power, an "...ahistorical enclave within a bustling movement of secularization and national and commercial development" which "...offers a kind of mental space in which the whole system [of social being and its governance] can be imagined as radically different" from the rest of the ancient world, Plato's Atlantis *does* participate in national and commercial movements of other city-states (Jameson 16). As such, Plato's Atlantis is not atemporal, but rather a space in which the momentum of socio-political and commercial change is not absolutely governed by external forces. In this way, Plato's Atlantis is a chronotope of *alternative time*, one influenced by the momentum of differentiation in ancient time, but not determined by it. We can thus say that Plato's Atlantis is

> something like a foreign body within the social [zeitgeist of antiquity as described by Plato whereby in it,] the differentiation process [has] momentarily been arrested, so that [it] remain[s] as it were momentarily beyond the reach of [ancient socio-political forces] and testify to [their] political powerlessness, at the same time that [it] offer[s] a space in which new wish images of the social can be elaborated and experienced. (Jameson 16)

In the last instance, however, the force that exerted the ultimate influence on the island and its ruling city-state was not the differentiating socio-political and economic momentum of the Athenians, the liberated Egyptians, or the former Atlantian colonies, but *nature* itself.

In "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopia" (1984), Foucault discusses the concept of heterotopia by providing and analysing various styles and principles thereof. Though the author gives no clear definition of a heterotopia to encapsulate, a latent principle subtending all six forms or instantiation of heterotopia he discusses. I offer the following working definition of heterotopia that will serve the analysis to follow: *heterotopias are spaces wherein the typified onto-existential, socio-political and cultural praxes as well as all flows of bio power of a given culture break down at most, or are renegotiated at least*. Here, the term heterotopia describes the human geographical phenomena of spaces and places that function in non-hegemonic ways or conditions. Heterotopic spaces are, therefore, spaces of otherness, liminality, fusion, confusion, play, and dynamism. They can, furthermore, hybridize various modalities and states of matter, they can be physical and ephemeral simultaneously like the space of a telephone call or one's reflection in the mirror.

Within the narrative framework of Plato's Atlantis, the city-state can be thought of as heterotopic in the following ways. Firstly, Atlantis, both topographically and culturally, represents a "...counter site, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted" (Foucault 3). According to Plato's account, this is *at least* topographically accurate. As an island-continent, the city-state of Atlantis is described as a topographical counter-site and reflection of the socio-political and socio-cultural infrastructures and ideologies of other, and in certain respects rival cultures, most notably Greece (Athens) and Egypt (Sias). When considered from a cultural perspective, however, Atlantis bears many of the hallmarks of a heterotopia or indeed heterotopias within it. Having said that, the account of Atlantian life and culture, though surprisingly robust despite its pithiness, does not elaborate in depth certain praxes of its inhabitants that would help elucidate a comprehensive theoretical profile of the city-state's heterotopianism or the heterotopias it contains.

However, the first serviceable example of heterotopia that Plato's narrative provides in terms of developing a theoretical profile of/for Atlantis is that of the heterotopia of juxtaposition. Foucault describes a heterotopia of juxtaposition as one which "...is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (Foucault 6). While Plato's account does not make mention of Atlantian theatrical praxes, an element which Foucault takes as an ur-example of a heterotopia of juxtaposition

symbolized succinctly by the theatrical stage itself, he does make mention of the elaborate and fecund gardens of Atlantis. Hetertopias of juxtaposition are spaces wherein a single space juxtaposes numerous spaces. Such heterotopias can also be described as heterotopias of bricolage/coalescence. Examples include the garden, wherein plants and flowers can be arranged or altered so as to act as coextensive microcosms of numerous heterogeneous environments and habitats. According to Foucault, "...the oldest example of these heterotopias that take the form of contradictory sites is the garden", a chronotope in which "...all the vegetation of the garden was supposed to come together in this space" (Foucault 6). As such, the garden is supposed to attest to symbolic perfection, and act as "...the smallest parcel of the world and then it is the totality of the world" (Foucault 6). Consider this against Plato's pithy, albeit comprehensive, account of Atlantian horticulture:

> Also whatever fragrant things there now are in the earth, whether roots, or herbage, or woods, or essences which distil from fruit and flower, grew and thrived in that land; also the fruit which admits of cultivation, both the dry sort, which is given us for nourishment and any other which we use for food-we call them all by the common name pulse, and the fruits having a hard rind, affording drinks and meats and ointments, and good store of chestnuts and the like, which furnish pleasure and amusement, and are fruits which spoil with keeping, and the pleasant kinds of dessert, with which we console ourselves after dinner, when we are tired of eating-all these that sacred island which then beheld the light of the sun, brought forth fair and wondrous and in infinite abundance. With such blessings the earth freely furnished them. (Plato 206)

It is the heterotopia of Atlantian gardens and overall horticulture which embody the concepts of fecundity, specifically appetitive abundance, bio-difference/diversity, and aesthetic perfection—as stated in the *Critias*—that intimates a latent link between Atlantis and other mythical utopian spaces, not all of which are isles, such as Eden, Shangri-La, and Shambalah.

Similar to Jameson's discussion of spatio-atemporality, Foucault offers a framework for understanding heterotopias of time. He states that there are "heterotopias of indefinitely accumulating time, for example, museums and libraries", in whose spaces objects from various points of time are brought together and, though existing

in time, are shielded from temporal decay by virtue of being housed therein. Museums and libraries have become heterotopias in which time does not stop, but they represent a "...will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of organizing in this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place" (Foucault 7). In this way, heterotopias of time are spaces wherein objects from varying points of time (not unlike the spatial flux inaugurated, curated, and sustained by the garden) can be physically dislodged from their original chronotopes. A second type of heterotopia of time concerns the opposite of infinity, namely, the brevity of time. Foucault refers to this as "the mode of the festival" (Foucault 7). Foucault chooses the fairground as an example of such a space, one that accumulates heteroclite objects and praxes, which stands idle for the duration of the year, save on specified days/weeks when they teem with activity.

Besides horse-racing (remaining mum on the frequency of its practice), Plato makes no mention of Atlantian entertainment in his narrative, thus, making the discernment of whether or not Atlantis possessed heterotopias of time in the mode of the festival speculative at best. In comparison to the privileged details of Atlantian horticultural praxes and provisions, such descriptive paucity seems odd. Furthermore, while he makes clear mention of the intellectual feats of Atlantis, its impressive edifices attesting to its inhabitants' engineering prowess, their development of the Atlantian Acropolis, its fortifications, the success and might of the city-state's navy, and so on, Plato makes no mention of where or how this wealth of knowledge was ordered, stored, or referred to. There is no mention of an Atlanian library, museum, record house, legislature, clerical registrar, or archive. Similarly, we do not find details regarding Atlantian medicine and aesculapian practices. The lack of details concerning Atlantian infrastructures of learning, knowledge, history, and art leads one to assume that all Atlantian wisdom and techne were, in some way, an affordance made possible by the hereditary aspects of their semi-divine natures.

In terms of the heterotopia of purification, Foucault specifies that these spaces always "...presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable" meaning that "...the heterotopic site is not freely accessible like a public space," but "...either the entry is compulsory, as in the case of entering a barracks or a prison, or else the individual has to submit to rites and purifications. To get in one must have certain permission and make certain gestures" (Foucault 7). The examples Foucault refers to, in

terms of activities of purification—both religious and hygienic, are Moslem hammams and Scandinavian saunas. While Plato makes mention of Atlantis's cold and hot springs and the bathing areas established for private citizens of the Acropolis, the royal house, horses, men, and women in his narrative, the nature of the use of and access to said bathing areas remains unclear. However, the rituals of judgement suggest that the temple of Poseidon at the centre of the island-continent represented a heterotopia of ritual/purification in two primary ways. First, the temple of Poseidon is described as being a space where the Atlantian rulers convened to pass judgement against themselves and their people. Before any judgement was passed, Plato describes in detail the protocols and rituals each member of the council would have to undergo and properly execute in order to purify themselves, both before their gods and before one another, of any charges or impiety. This ritual involved specific clothing, times, sacrificial victims, and pronouncements. Second, the ritual of judgement could not occur without the preceding ritual sequence of purification. Having been described as a private, nocturnal/auroric rite, this entire process is both symbolically and praxeologically liminal in terms of both space and time as it takes place out of view of the public. In this way, the twofold predication of Atlantian rituals of judgement and the spaces in which they take place are heterotopic since they are exclusive, i.e., only accessible to a conditional few and this accessibility too is based on the knowledge of the requisite processes and protocols of ritual purification.

It is in terms of the sixth possibility of heterotopia that Foucault theorizes that Plato's Atlantis, both as city-state and island-continent, is *most* heterotopic. Foucault describes the sixth principle of heterotopia as being twofold. On the one hand, heterotopia's function is to create spaces of illusion. The function of the space of illusion is to expose all real spaces and sites wherein human life is partitioned as more illusory. On the other hand, Foucault states that these heterotopias also "...create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled. This latter type would be the heterotopia, not of illusion, but of compensation" (Foucault 8). If we regard Atlantis as an idyllic and mystical stronghold of a super-race, as Plato's literary narrative intimates, then the island-continent and city-state represent a perfect organization of not only terrestrial space, evidenced in the concentric symmetry of its topography, but also the perfect arrangement of its society and populace. Beyond this, Atlantis—and other mythical islands—*as* an island, theoretically

shares some of the qualities of the heterotopia *par excellence*, namely, the boat/ship. Foucault states,

> the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea and that, from port to port, from tack to tack, from brothel to brothel, it goes as far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their gardens [...therefore] in civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates. (Foucault 9)

It would then seem that Atlantis's naval imperialism, bio-diversity, and socio-economic fecundity that Plato describes, all closed in on themselves and yet given over to the sea and replete with the treasures won or traded from the ports, brothels and gardens of ancient Egypt and Athens, conform to Foucault's rather poetic conceptualization of heterotopia *par excellence*. Regardless of how heterotopic a boat/ship may be, Plato's narrative of Atlantis illustrates that a mythical island, like a boat/ship can sink, no matter how laden it may be.

Plato's Atlantis is a primary example of the ur-occidental mythical island, as it reflects heterotopic qualities. Any theoretical profile of Plato's Atlantis must take into account the city-state's numerous instances of socio-political, economic, and cultural simultaneity and paradox. The above analysis has explored Plato's Atlantis to illustrate that while other mythical or lost lands/isles in Western mytho-religious systems often serve or reflect a specific purpose or quality, Plato's Atlantis is, theoretically, a comparative composite of all of them. Plato's account portrays the island-state as theoretically predicated on paradoxes, simultaneously mystical and banal, attractive and dangerous, seemingly timeless and radically brief. It is a space of onto-existential liminality and topographical symmetry. From its origins, its description as a city/island-state built and ruled by demigods, to its population being a result of inter-ontic procreation, Plato's Atlantis and its foundations are consistently concerned with flouting of boundaries and liminality of existence.

In each instance, the paradoxes resulting from this liminality and flouting of boundaries also manifests itself in the city-state's sense of being simultaneously both open *and* closed. Plato's narrative illustrates that while the topography of the island and the architecture of the city echo the panopticism of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon,

Atlantis was by no means completely carceral, closed, insular, or self-contained. On the one hand, as the *Critian* dialogue states, Atlantian trade, conquest, and other forms of inter-cultural exchange were fundamental aspects that contributed to the city's socio-economic strength and prosperity, while on the other hand, the land itself was rich with exportable goods from precious ore (orichalcum), quarry stone, timber, to wild as well as husbanded livestock including animals from marshlands, river-lands, as well as mountain-lands, all of which have been described as being bounteous and sufficiently maintained by the natural resources of the island itself, allowing the finances for aqueducts, gardens, temples, guardhouses, horse-racing tracks, and so on. As a result, the heterotopic concentration of diasporic flora and fauna found in Plato's Atlantis gives the island an Edenic, albeit closed quality. At the same time, being expert in trade and warfare, Atlantis would also appear to have been a secular cosmopolitan city-state; one whose historical verisimilitude, archaeological evidence, possible theoretical interpretations, and everything else ultimately redound to the same sense of utopian interstice, historical liminality, incomplete destruction, murky preservation, or, in short, heterotopianism.

Works Cited

Akkerman, Abraham. “Platonic Myth and Urban Space: City-Form as an Allegory.” *University of Toronto Quarterly*, vol. 83, no. 4, 2014, pp. 757-779.

Broadie, Sarah. *Nature and Divinity in Plato’s Timaeus*. Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Donnelly, Ignatius L. *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World*. Harper and Row, 1882.

E.E.O. “Atlantis from ‘The Timaeus and Critias’ of Plato.” *Lucifer*, vol.2, no.12, 1888, pp.465-470.

Euhemerus (of Messene). *Atlantis; Euhemeros of Messene’s Panchai; Iamboulos’ Island of the Sun ; Sir Francis Bacon’s New Atlantis; with a Supplement, Utopian Prototypes, Developments, and Variations.* Edited by Diskin Clay and Andrea L. Purvis, Focus Pub./R Pullins Company, 1999.

Foucault, Michel. “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias.” *Architecture/Movement/Continue* (1984) Trans. Jay Miskowiec (1967).

Garvey, Tom. “Plato’s Atlantis Story: A Prose Hymn to Athena.” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, vol. 48, no. 4, 2010, pp. 381-392.

Gill, Christopher. *Plato: The Atlantis Story*. Bristol Classical Press, 1980.

---. “Plato’s Atlantis Story and the Birth of Fiction.” *Philosophy and Literature*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1979, pp. 64-78.

Jameson, Fredric. *Archaeologies of the Future: the Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions.* Verso, 2007.

Jowett, Benjamin, translator. *The Dialogues of Plato. Vol. 4*. By Plato, National Library Company, 1914.

---. “Plato’s Atlantis Dialogues.” *Plato’s Atlantis Dialogues*. 2006, pp. 206.

Proclus. *Proclus: Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*. Edited by Harold Tarrant, Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Rapisarda, Massimo. "A scientific approach to Plato's Atlantis." *Atti della Accademia Peloritana dei Pericolanti: Classe di Scienze Fisiche, Matematiche e Naturali*, vol. 93, no. 2, 2015.

Stegman, Casey. "Remembering Atlantis: Plato's Timaeus-Critias, the Ancestral Constitution, and the Democracy of the Gods." *Political Theory*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2017, pp. 240-260.

Tofighian, Omid. *Myth and Philosophy in Platonic Dialogues.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.